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DEPARTMENT FOR AF
STATE PASS AID
LONDON, PARIS FOR AFRICA WATCHER

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [PREL](#) [MOPS](#) [ASEC](#) [KPAO](#) [SO](#) [KE](#)
SUBJECT: SOMALIA PRIME MINISTER BY TURNS ACCUSATORY,
RECONCILIATORY

REF: (A) NAIROBI 4903; (B) STATE 174136

SUMMARY

1. (C) Somali Prime Minister Gedi November 25 alternately accused the USG of abandoning Somalis to the killing clutches of Mogadishu warlords, and sought our advice on building a "third way" in Parliament -- depending on who was in the room. He admitted he and the Jowhar TFG faction were taking liberties with the Transitional Federal Charter, and claimed to be the only man able to unite Somalia, but bemoaned his inability to bring together a session of Parliament. END SUMMARY.

FINALLY, A MEETING

2. (C) Transitional Federal Government (TFG) Prime Minister Ali Mohamed Gedi met Somalia Watcher November 25 at our request, the first such face-to-face encounter the PM has accorded Somalia Watcher since February. The meeting took place in the former Nairobi residence of the late SPLA/SPLM leader Dr. John Garang, apparently under lease to UNDP for Gedi's use (although rumors have Gedi pocketing the \$1,300/month rent). While the PM has spent 60% of his time in Jowhar, his family appears to reside in the house full-time. Also in attendance was Mohamed Ali Nur, AKA "Americo", Finance and Administrative Manager, Liaison Office of the Prime Minister in Nairobi. No other Transitional Federal Institution (TFI) members were present.

3. (C) Gedi welcomed Somalia Watcher with the same affability he had shown us and other USG officials in the first months of his Ministry, expressing his regret that so much time had passed without an exchange of views. For the rest of the hour-and-a-half meeting, he flashed between a hard-line defense of TFG President Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed and the Jowhar faction's activities since June, and a pensive discussion of the barriers to success of the TFIs. His switches seemed to be dictated by whether Americo was in the room or not.

14. (C) The PM's accusatory and defensive side took on the predictable hues of a "Yusufian" diatribe against the MPs and Ministers who have refused to join the Jowhar faction. Gedi decried the absence of an international community denunciation of the November 12 killings in Mogadishu of two children of one of the Parliament's Deputy Speakers. He claimed that TFG Minister for Commerce and warlord Muse Sudi Yalahow had threatened to commit such an atrocity against any MP who "defected" to Jowhar, and wondered at the lack of subsequent international condemnation. Gedi also accused the USG and UN Security Council of seeking to leave Somalia defenseless in a hostile neighborhood via the UN arms embargo. He opined it seemed that the world wanted him to sit quietly and wait for the warlords to come kill him, and declared that he and his colleagues in Jowhar simply could not take such a passive position. The USG's comparative silence left him wondering if in fact the U.S. wanted governance at all for Somalia. Such silence seemed to him particularly striking in light of a real terrorist threat -- to which he gave responsibility for the November 6 attack on his convoy in Mogadishu. "You only tell us that we must go catch the bad guys -- not about how we are supposed to survive the effort."

HOW TO CREATE A "THIRD WAY"

15. (C) Gedi seemed to revert to his old NGO personality, whenever left alone for a few minutes. He could slip seamlessly from a rant against the perfidious UN to

plaintive discussions of how to unite the TFIs each time his aide left the room.

16. (C) The PM on these occasions stated that his first priority was to set in motion a process leading to a full session of Parliament. He claimed full awareness of the fact that many of the actions the Jowhar faction had taken since June were illegal under the Transitional Federal Charter. "We cannot spend or commit funds without Parliament to approve expenditures," he pointed out, "and we cannot govern if we cannot spend." He readily admitted that the coastal security contract his Minister of Fisheries had signed that morning was of questionable legality (see reftel A), but stated, "We have to do something about the theft of our natural resources -- and of course, about piracy."

17. (C) PM Gedi brought up the Barre Hirale initiative, wherein the TFG Minister for Reconstruction and Resettlement has been seeking to convene a committee of MPs in Kismayo to discuss the modalities of a full session of Parliament. Gedi stated that the backers of the initiative appeared to be a group of MPs who realized that "they had made a very stupid mistake" in aligning themselves with one side or the other in the TFI division. (He did not opine on whether his alignment was also a "stupid mistake".) These MPs, according to Gedi, were seeking to form a "third way" in the center of the dispute. The PM considered this to be the only hope for reaching a point where Parliament could actually convene.

18. (C) Somalia Watcher drew from the message that AF DAS Yamamoto had delivered to Yusuf on the margins of the United Nations General Assembly (reftel B). Asking the PM to put aside the question of whether one TFI faction or the other was right or wrong, he repeated that:

-- Our bilateral engagement will be part of a process based on opportunities presented through the framework of the TFIs.

-- The USG does not support individual leaders or groups, and consequently we await evidence of positive relations among Somali leaders and their ability to cooperate for the

good of the country.

-- The most compelling evidence of positive relations would be the uniting of a parliamentary quorum across faction lines to meet, discuss, and resolve your differences.

¶9. (C) Gedi heard this message without debate, agreeing that the parliament's legitimacy-in-numbers might reduce the current focus on individual personalities. He expressed his doubts, however, that this might be successfully done. In particular, he said he did not think he could migrate from the Jowhar faction to the "third way" center -- despite having earlier claimed (within earshot of others) that he was the only Somali politician capable of uniting all factions.

COMMENT:

¶10. (C) The PM's nearly schizophrenic switches between "NGO Ali" and "Yusuf's Prime Minister" were dizzying. The relatively opulent surroundings of his UN-financed digs gave pause, and certainly triggered curiosity as to where the funds flowing into the Jowhar faction from Italian bilateral aid or European Commission finances were finding their end use. While wanting to believe that Gedi's apparently sincere and pensive moments were the true expressions of his political leanings, Post cannot rule out the possibility that his hard-line support for Yusuf is closer to reality. As with most things Somali, the reality is certainly a combination of these two extremes, and the PM will be susceptible to influence should the proper incentives and

disincentives be placed before him. Additional cash is probably not the answer, as Gedi appears to be living quite comfortably in a fully-furnished seven-bedroom house, well beyond the means of either a former large animal veterinarian's savings or of his office's legitimate revenue stream. More likely to provide appropriate incentives might be help to the PM in finding a way out of the deadly cul de sac in which he finds himself. END COMMENT.

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